United Nations A/55/953

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 May 2001

Original: English

Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 27
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Letter dated 22 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request that you arrange for the distribution as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 27, of the present letter and its annex, the communiqué of the fifth ordinary session of the Central Organ of the Organization of African Unity Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, at the level of heads of State and Government, held at Lomé, Togo, on 18 and 19 May 2001 (see annex).*

(*Signed*) Martin **Andjaba**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Namibia
Chairman of the African Group for May 2001

* Annex is being circulated in the languages of submission only (English and French).

01-38972 (E) 060601

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE AFRICAINE

Fax: 51 78 44/51 93 21 P. O. Box 3243 Addis Ababa Ethiopia Telephone: (251-1) 51 38 22

Fifth Ordinary Session of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, at the Level of Heads of State and Government

18 - 19 May 2001
Lome, TOGO

Central Organ/MEC/AHG/Comm. (V)

COMMUNIQUE

COMMUNIQUE OF THE FIFTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE OAU MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION AT THE LEVEL OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

The Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution held its Fifth Ordinary Session at the level of Heads of State and Government from 18 to 19 May 2001 in Lome, Togo. The Session was chaired by H.E. Gnassingbe Eyadema, President of the Togolese Republic and Current Chairman of the OAU.

The meeting was attended by the Heads of State and Heads of Delegation of Member States of the Central Organ:

- H.E. Mr. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria;

- H.E. Chief Olusegun OBASANJO, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;

- H.E. Mr. Mohamed ABDELAZIZ, President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic;

- H.E. Mr. Abdoulaye WADE, President of the Republic of Senegal;

- H.E. General Omar Hassan AL-BASHIR, President of the Republic of the Sudan;

- H.E. Mr. Frederick CHILUBA, President of the Republic of Zambia;

- H.E. Mr. Kategaya ERIYA, First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda;

- H.E. Mr. Nayabtigungu CONGO KABORE, Minister of Regional Integration of Burkina Faso.

- H.E. Mr. Severin NTAHOMVUKIYE, Minister of External Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi;

- H.E. Mr. Santiago Nsobeya Efuman NCHAMA, Minister of Foreign affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea;

- H.E. Mr. Hipolito PATRICIO, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique;

- H.E. Mr. Sadok FAYALA, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia;

- H.E. Mr. Mustaq MOORAD, Ambassador of the Republic of Botswana;

- H.E. Mr. Prithiviraj FOOKEERAH, Ambassador of the Republic of Mauritius;

President Alpha Omar Konare of Mali, Current Chairman of ECOWAS, also attended the meeting. Ministers and representatives of the following Member States were also in attendance:

- H.E. Mr. Lamine SIDIME, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea;

- H.E. Mr. Rodolphe ADADA, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie of the Republic of the Congo;

- H.E. Mr. Monie R. CAPTAN, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia;

- H.E. Mr. Ali TREIKI, Minister of African Union of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya;

- H.E. Mr. Andre BUMAYA, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda;

- H.E. Dr. Ahmed Ramadan DUMBUYA, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone;

- H.E. Dr. (Mrs.) N. DHLAMINI-ZUMA, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa;

- H.E. Mr. EL-HEFNY, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt;

- H.E. Mr. Charles S. Kileo, Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania;

- H.E. Mr. Keffa Emile MILINGUI, Ambassador of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire;

- H.E. Mr. Emmanuel MENDOUME-NZE, Ambassador of the Gabonese Republic;

- H.E. Mr. Masuhla H. LETEKA, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho;
- H.E. Mr. George M. LISWANISO, Ambassador of the Republic of Namibia.

The Secretary General of the United Nations was represented by Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs.

Sir Ketumile Masire, Facilitator of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, attended the meeting, as well as the representative of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary.

The Central Organ reviewed the overall situation of peace and security in Africa and expressed its grave preoccupation over the persistence of conflicts in various regions of the continent with the attendant loss of life and the destruction of property and infrastructure. It also expressed its concern over the acute humanitarian tragedies which have occurred as a result of these conflicts, involving situations in which millions of refugees and displaced persons are caught in a vicious cycle of violence and violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law.

The Central Organ, nonetheless, took note of the positive developments which have occurred, in addressing conflict situations on the continent, since the last session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Lome, in July 2000. In this respect, it expressed its satisfaction at:

- the commendable efforts made by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, which culminated in the Agreement signed in Algiers, Algeria, on 12 December 2000, between Ethiopia and Eritrea, putting an end to the conflict between the two countries;

- the signing on 17 February 2001 of the Framework Agreement for National Reconciliation in the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros;

- the reactivation of the implementation process of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

- the progress made in the peace process in Sierra Leone;

- the significant progress achieved in the peace and reconciliation process in the Republic of the Congo;

- the encouraging trend towards peace and national reconciliation in Somalia following the Arta Peace Conference;

- the significant progress towards national reconciliation in the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire; and

- the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Sudan and Uganda.

The Central Organ was encouraged by these achievements and appealed to all the parties involved in conflicts on the continent to put an end to armed confrontations and violence and to seek peaceful solutions to their differences through dialogue and accommodation, so as to provide an atmosphere leading to peace and security on the continent. In this respect, the Central Organ paid deserved tribute to all African countries that contribute troops and provide assistance and support for peacekeeping operations on the continent. It also expressed its appreciation to non-African countries for their support to such operations.

The Central Organ reiterated its determination to assist in the creation of a conducive environment that would enable the release of African energies and resources towards socio-economic recovery and development, particularly at a time when the African continent and its peoples are engaged in the exalting task of further enhancing African unity and solidarity within the framework of the African Union.

The Central Organ considered the situation in the Great Lakes Region, focusing on the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. It also considered the situation in the sub-region of the Mano River Basin, including the conflict in Sierra Leone, on the one hand, and the crisis among the countries of the Mano River Union, on the other. The Central Organ was briefed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie of the Republic of the Congo on the evolution of the Peace Process in his country and by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa on the implementation of the Framework Agreement for National Reconciliation in the Islamic Federal Republic of Comoros.

At the end of its deliberations, the Central Organ adopted the following decisions:

ON THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO:

The Central Organ:

1. **Reiterated** its commitment to and support for the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement as the only framework negotiated and accepted by all the parties for the resolution of the conflict in the DRC, as well as for ensuring respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the DRC;

2. **Paid tribute** to President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, Chairman of the Regional Initiative for the peace process in the DRC, and to all the other leaders for their sustained efforts to facilitate the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement;

3. **Expressed** satisfaction at the new disposition of the government of the DRC and the other parties to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, as well as the outcome of the 3rd Summit of the Signatories, held in Lusaka on 15 February 2001, and the adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 1341(2001) of 22 February 2001;

4. **Noted** with satisfaction that the parties have generally implemented the Plans and sub-plans for the Disengagement and Redeployment of troops. It **urged** the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) to fulfill the commitment it made during the Tenth session of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement in the DRC, held in Lusaka, Zambia, on 6 April 2001, to disengage its forces to the agreed positions;

5. **Welcomed** the outcome of the meeting of the Political Committee for the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, particularly the adoption of the concept of operations and timetable for phase I of the Draft Plan on the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Resettlement of armed groups and the concept of the orderly withdrawal of all foreign forces from the DRC;

6. **Strongly supported** the request made by the Political Committee for the UN Security Council to authorize the deployment of additional military observers and related personnel to attain the authorized level of 5,537 military personnel and to take into account the need to ensure the stability and security of the DRC following the withdrawal of all foreign forces in its conceptualization and planning for the third phase of MONUC's deployment. In this regard, it **welcomed** the ongoing Security Council mission aimed at furthering the peace process in the DRC and in the Region as a whole;

7. **Called upon** OAU Member States and the International Community at large to continue to support the Joint Military Commission (JMC). It **expressed** its support for the JMC co-location programme with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) at all levels and **appealed** to the parties to quickly reach an agreement on the transfer of the JMC to Kinshasa. In this respect, the Central Organ took note of the commitment of the Government of the DRC to facilitate the transfer and guarantee the security of the members of the JMC;

8. **Urged** all the parties concerned to extend full cooperation to MONUC in the fulfillment of its mandate;

9. **Commended** the efforts made by the Facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, to prepare for the Inter-Congolese National Dialogue, and the signing by the Congolese Parties, on 4 May 2001, in Lusaka, of a Declaration of Fundamental

Principles. The Central Organ **welcomed** the decision of the Government of the DRC to lift the ban on the activities of the political parties. It **appealed** to all the Congolese parties to cooperate fully with the Facilitator and to participate in the National Dialogue in a spirit of mutual accommodation and compromise;

10. **Took note** of the Report of the UN Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the DRC, as well as the comments and reactions of the States and other actors mentioned in the Report, which is to be completed with an Addendum;

11. **Expressed** its grave concern about the humanitarian situation and the repeated violations of the International Humanitarian Law committed in the DRC. It **called upon** all OAU Member States and the International Community at large to provide increased assistance to the affected population and **urged** the parties to comply strictly with the International Humanitarian Law.

ON BURUNDI:

The Central Organ:

1. **Expressed** its grave concern over the impasse in the Arusha peace process and the disturbing developments that could lead to a major disaster in Burundi;

2. **Regretted** the fact that the parties have still not reached a consensus regarding the leadership of the transition and the establishment of the transitional institutions. It **urged** the Burundian parties to pursue the dialogue in order to arrive at the necessary compromise based on the recommendations of the 14th Summit of the Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi, held in Arusha, Tanzania, on 26 February 2001;

3. **Condemned** the actions of the armed groups that have undermined the Arusha peace process;

4. **Called upon** the parties to the conflict to strictly abide by the provisions of the International Humanitarian Law;

5. **Demanded** that the armed groups abide immediately and faithfully with the call of the countries of the region, the OAU and the UN for an end of hostilities and to enter into negotiations with a view to implementing the Arusha Agreement;

6. **Expressed support** for the efforts of the Mediator, President Nelson Mandela, and the Vice-President of South Africa, Mr. Jacob Zuma, as well as President El Hadj Omar Bongo of the Gabonese Republic, and all the people of goodwill who are deploying efforts to encourage the belligerents to end hostilities and conclude a ceasefire agreement;

7. **Encouraged** President Museveni and the other Heads of State of the Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi to pursue their efforts aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, including reaching an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, in conformity with the decisions adopted at their Nairobi Summit, held on 20 September 2000;

8. **Requested** the UN Security Council to continue to lend firm support to the peace process, including the deployment of security and protection personnel, as soon as the necessary conditions are met;

9. **Encouraged** the Follow-up Committee for the Implementation of the Arusha Agreement to vigorously pursue its efforts;

10. **Expressed satisfaction** at the efforts of the Burundi/ Tanzania/UNHCR Tripartite Committee and **called upon** the International Community to help in creating conditions that are conducive to the return of the Burundian refugees;

11. **Expressed** serious concern about the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Burundi and **appealed** to OAU Member States and the International Community to provide the Burundian civilian population with increased humanitarian assistance.

ON SIERRA LEONE:

The Central Organ:

1. **Reaffirmed** that the Lome Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999 remained the appropriate framework for the pursuit of the peace and national reconciliation process;

2. **Stressed** the need for all the parties to fully comply with the provisions of the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement and to pursue the path of dialogue and reconciliation as the most viable means of achieving lasting peace in Sierra Leone. In particular, it **urged** the RUF to scrupulously honour the

commitments it had made and to extend its full cooperation to UNAMSIL, ECOWAS and the OAU, in their efforts to accelerate the peace process;

3. **Welcomed** the positive evolution of the peace process in Sierra Leone and, in particular, **expressed** support for the outcome of the 2nd Meeting of the Committee of Six of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, the United Nations, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF on advancing the peace process in Sierra Leone, held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 2 May 2001, as well as the outcome of the meeting of the Joint Committee composed of the Government of Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL and the RUF, held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on 15 May 2001;

4. **Encouraged** the parties to work towards the speedy implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (DDR), which constitutes a key component of the peace process;

5. **Called upon** the United Nations Security Council to provide UNAMSIL with the requisite means to enable it discharge its mandate and **appealed** to the International Community, including OAU Member States, to provide troops so that UNAMSIL can achieve its targeted force level;

6. **Appealed** to the International Community, including OAU Member States, to provide humanitarian assistance to the affected population in Sierra Leone and to support the Government of Sierra Leone in its efforts to develop and implement peace-building programmes that would pave the way for post-conflict reconstruction and socio-economic development.

ON THE CRISIS IN THE MANO RIVER UNION:

The Central Organ:

1. **Expressed** its grave concern over the conflict along the borders of the countries of the Mano River Union, namely Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia;

2. **Called upon** all the parties concerned to do everything they can to ensure that peace is restored, as soon as possible, to the region, by promoting a policy of good neighbourliness, taking measures to prohibit the activities of armed rebel groups operating on their respective territories, in conformity with the Protocol of Non-Aggression of ECOWAS of 22 April 1978, as well as opening borders without delay;

3. **Further called** for more vigorous efforts to be made to implement the decisions of the ECOWAS Summits of Bamako and Abuja held from 15 to 16 December 2000 and on 11 April 2001, respectively;

4. **Welcomed** the recent establishment by the ECOWAS Heads of State of a Mediation Committee composed of the Presidents of Mali, Nigeria and Togo and **expressed** the strong support of the Organization of African Unity for their efforts;

5. **Expressed support** for the efforts of ECOWAS to deploy an ECOMOG Force along the borders of the Mano River countries and also **encouraged** the Governments of Liberia and Guinea to sign the Status of Forces Agreements to facilitate the deployment;

6. **Called upon** the United Nations Security Council to authorize the deployment of that Force without further delay and **appealed** to the International Community to provide financial and material support to ECOWAS to deploy and sustain the Force;

7. **Expressed its grave concern** over the alarming humanitarian situation in the Mano River sub-region and **appealed** to OAU Member States and the International Community at large to provide assistance that is commensurate with the magnitude of the tragedy;

8. **Paid tribute** to Guinea for its enormous contribution to the hosting of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia and **appealed** for more assistance to be extended to the Government of Guinea to enable it continue to shoulder this burden and meet the needs of its own displaced population.

ON THE SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO:

The Central Organ:

1. **Welcomed** the positive evolution in the peace and reconciliation process, in particular the outcome of the National Dialogue;

2. **Encouraged** the people of the Republic of the Congo and their leaders to build on this achievement with a view to consolidating the process of national reconciliation and **appealed** to the international community to provide assistance in support of socio-economic reconstruction and development;

3. **Paid tribute** to President El-Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon for his sustained efforts as International Mediator for the Republic of the Congo to promote peace and reconciliation in that country.

ON THE ISLAMIC FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF THE COMOROS:

The Central Organ:

1. **Welcomed** the signing, on 17 February 2001, of the Framework Agreement for National Reconciliation in the Comoros and **encouraged** all the Comorian parties to faithfully implement the Agreement;

2. **Paid tribute** to South Africa and the other countries of the Region and the Troika of the Central Organ and **encouraged** them, working closely with the General Secretariat, to continue with their efforts aimed at promoting a lasting solution to the crisis in the Archipelago, based on the respect for the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros and the return to constitutional order;

3. **Expressed** appreciation for the contributions made by the International Organization of the Francophonie, the League of Arab States, the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Conference to the reconciliation process in the Comoros and called for greater coordination of their efforts with those of the OAU;

4. **Appealed** to OAU Member States and the International Community at large to provide assistance for socio-economic reconstruction and development in the Comoros.

The Central Organ expressed its gratitude to H.E. President Gnassingbe Eyadema of the Togolese Republic, Current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and Chairman of the Central Organ, as well as the government and people of Togo, for having generously hosted the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Central Organ at the level of Heads of State and Government, and for the warm hospitality and excellent working conditions they provided, which contributed immensely to the success of the Summit.

Done in Lome, 19 May 2001